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ABSTRACT

The document represents one of the efforts of a special advisory committee formed in 1966 to assist the Pennsylvania Department of Education in formulating ways and means of developing an awareness of conservation problems. The document has been designed to help the teacher create an interest in conservation that will stay with pupils and add meaning to their lives. Outdoor education is discussed, and suggestions are made to help teachers develop plans to further desirable attitudes and understanding among students toward their immediate and total environment. (EL)

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GUIDELINES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY

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GUIDELINES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY

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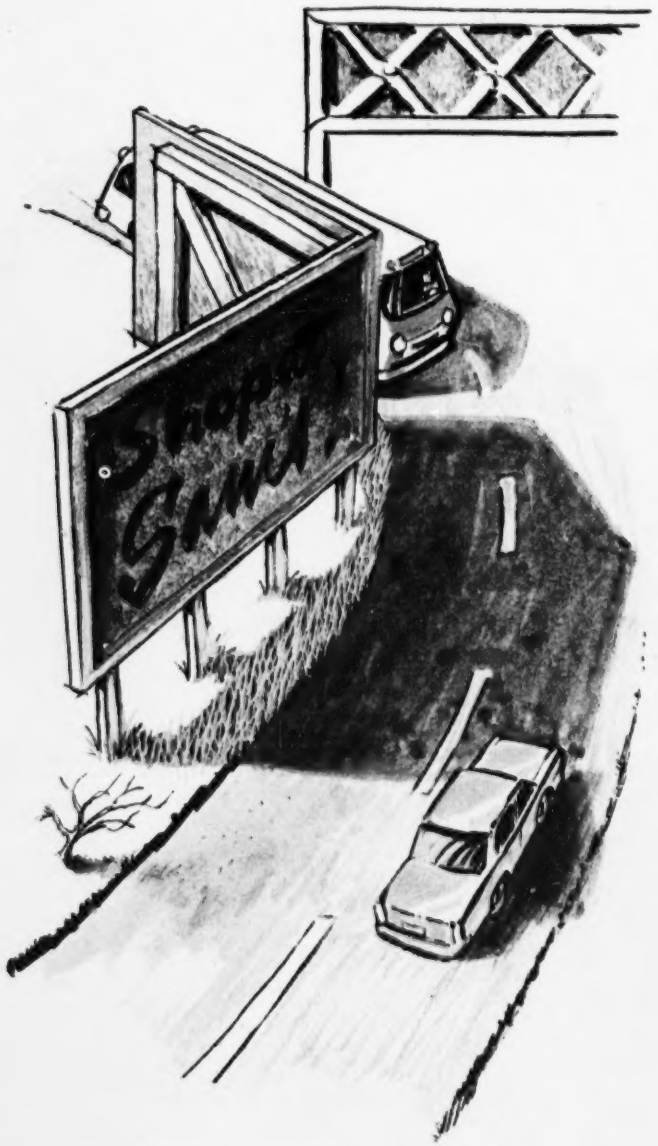
INTRODUCTION

As our population has increased and our way of life has changed, we Americans have gradually become less sensitive to the environment in which we live and upon which we depend for survival. Close contact with the good earth, once normal in a rural society, has been lost by most children and adults who live today in an urban environment of cities and suburbs. More cities, more people, more industry, more highways and airports and shopping centers are placing skyrocketing demands on natural resources which are not limitless. We can never have more water, more land, more air, more sunlight or more fossil fuel than we have today. The problem involves not only shortages or increased costs of material goods, it equally involves human behavioral patterns related directly to contamination of the environment—air and water pollution, solid waste disposal, noise, congestion of human and vehicular traffic, and the monotony of buildings and man-made scenery.

Someone has said that the growth of man is limited only by the dimension's of man's mind. The answer to the problem of environmental contamination rests on the capacity of the human mind in finding ways to reduce waste, produce more food on a given amount of land, restoring the natural beauty of countryside and city alike, and treating human wastes so they do not pollute or despoil air, water, and earth. But no problem can be solved without knowledge of the facts and a desire to seek a solution. This is the role of education and of educators. This is your job.

The out-of-doors environment is an important place to study, to



learn, and to explore. Outdoor education is education beyond the classroom. It is not a separate discipline with its own prescribed objectives, but a learning climate, wherein the school curriculum is enriched through direct experiences. It supplies the educational experiences which bridge the gap between the classroom and the environment.

An outdoor education program is closely correlated with classroom activities, and becomes an extension of the classroom. The teacher and the students plan the experience together. They share the experience as a group, and after returning to the classroom, build on the learnings through follow-up activities.

An outdoor setting can provide a laboratory situation for many of the curriculum areas, but by its very nature it is particularly suited to learnings in the natural sciences and social studies. But in such a setting, language arts, mathematics, physical education, health, art and music also have an important role.

In all these subject matter areas, wherever it is possible, direct experience should be employed as a teaching tool. Field trips taken to a museum, aquarium, or planetarium help the children to see more clearly that which they have been studying in the classroom. For other direct experiences the classroom should be extended to include the school grounds, a metropolitan park, a farm, an industry or other out-of-school setting. Many school systems have included a five-day resident outdoor education experience using the facilities of a camp as their "outdoor school."

Outdoor education is a real-life situation which provides op-

portunities for acquiring skills for a lifetime of creative living, for attaining concepts about human and natural resources, and for learning that man is still dependent upon the out-of-doors for his existence.

Urbanization, automation, mechanization, along with the frenzied tempos of modern living and the increase of sedentary activities, has magnified the need for outdoor activities and competence in related skills. The surge to outdoor recreation pursuits with resultant pressures on the land and water resources substantiates the need for education in and for the out-of-doors.

In 1966 a special advisory committee was formed to assist the Pennsylvania Department of Education in formulating ways and means of developing an awareness of conservation problems in the Pennsylvania classroom.

This handbook represents one of the efforts of that committee. It has been designed to help the classroom teacher create an awareness of conservation problems within the *local* community. This publication is intended to *guide* the teacher in creating an interest in conservation problems that will stay with pupils and add meaning to their lives.

This generation of pupils may well decide whether the resources of this nation will sustain our way of life in the future. It is with this in mind that we offer the following suggestions from which you as a teacher may develop plans to further desirable attitudes and understanding among your students toward their immediate and total environment.

LOOK

Conservation and outdoor education are built in a variety of interests.

Dr. George L. Fersh, Joint Council on Economic Education, says:

"Young people want to learn about what interests them. They are interested in their natural environment—vegetation, air, bodies of water, mountains, forests, and wildlife.

"They are interested in phenomena of nature—the changing of seasons, drought and floods, fair weather and foul, earthquakes and tornadoes, growth and decay, birth and death.

"They are interested in the materials that are used to meet their daily needs for food, clothing, shelter, household and recreational equipment, transportation, and spiritual satisfactions.

"They are interested in the work of people who deal with natural resources--the farmer, miner, rancher, chemist, biologist, oceanographer, landscaper, architect, engineer. They are interested in how other people use natural resources in our times and how they used them years ago—the differences or similarities." *

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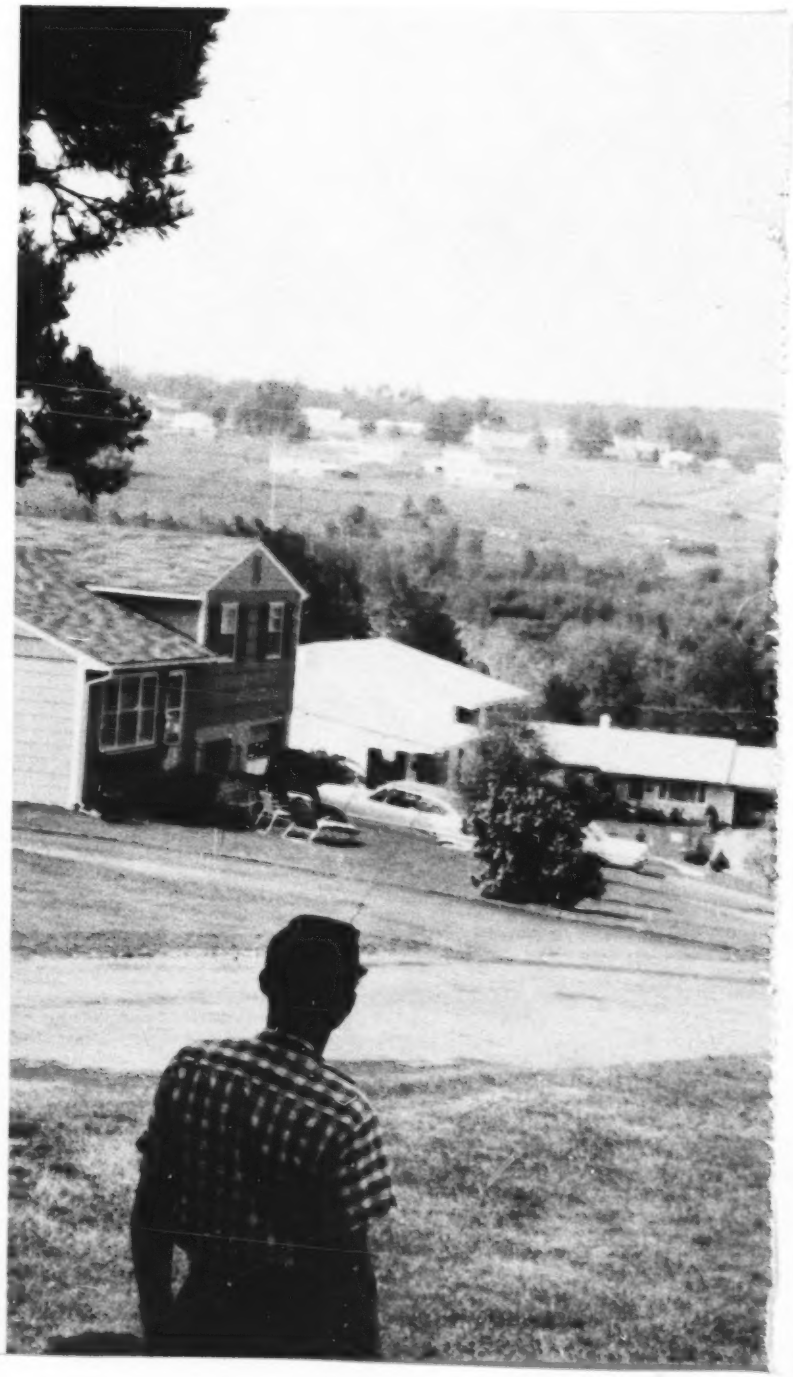
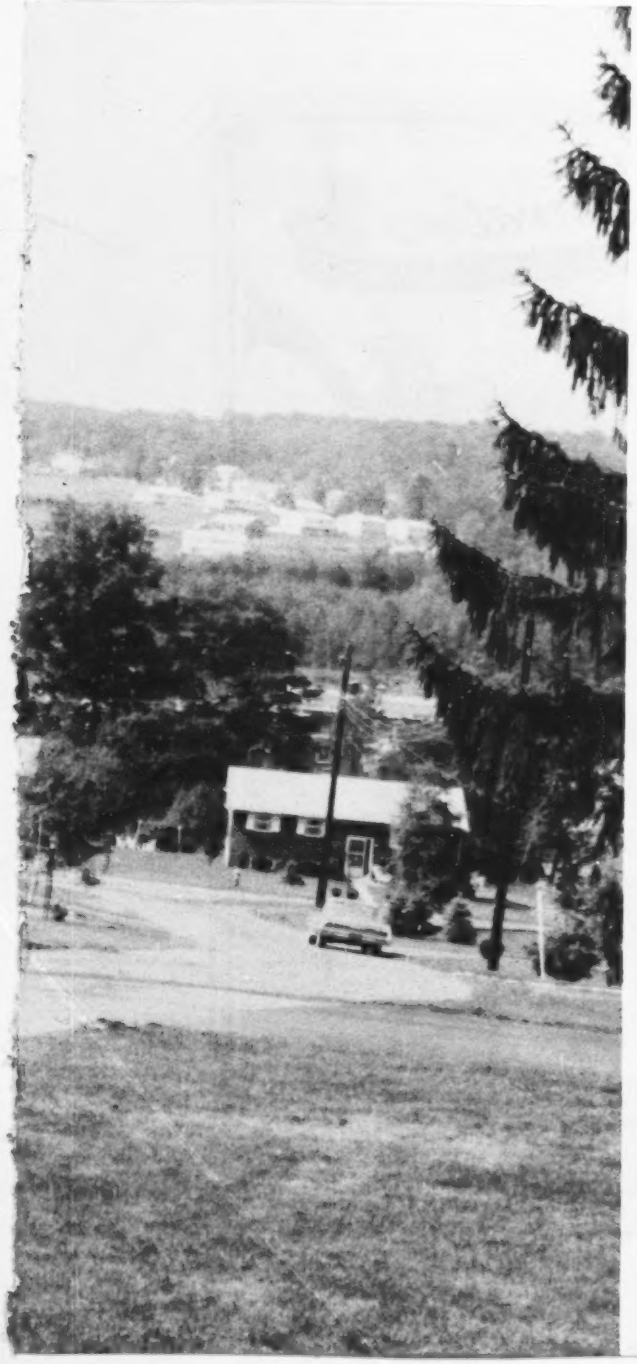
LOOK AROUND

Is your community concerned with:

Wildlife Habitats
Soil Erosion and Pollution
Visual Pollution—roadsides, overhead wires, junk yards, billboards, litterbugging
Abandoned Mines and Quarries
Air, Water, and Sound Pollution
Pesticides, Weed Killers, Radiation
Water Shortages
Frequent Flooding
Urban Sprawl
Open Space—Trails, Parks, and Recreational Areas
Population Pressures
Traffic Congestion
Mental Tensions
Sewage, garbage, solid wastes disposal
Preservation and Development of Historic Landmarks
Substandard Residential Areas
Unsightly Large Areas of Vacant Property
Food and World Famine
Forest Management
Planning and Zoning





LOOK INTO

Does your community have:

- A sewage disposal plant?
- A planning commission?
- A municipal park area?
- A summer recreational program?
- A Boy Scout program, Girl Scout program, FFA, 4-H Club, Hunter Safety, and other organized activities for youth in sports and recreation?
- Service clubs, such as Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, Sportsmen's Clubs, Women's Clubs, or Garden Clubs that are interested in conservation action?
- A park, fair ground or similar areas?
- Enforcement of ordinances for prevention of air and water pollution?
- Local news media interested in conservation projects?

Does your school:

- Emphasize conservation education?
- Have an outdoor laboratory?

Is your county part of a soil and water conservation district?

Are there any State forests, State game lands, historical sites in your area?

LOOK OUT

Things to consider:

- Natural Resources
- The Population Problem
- Urbanism
- Suburbanism
- Consumption of Material Things
- Industrialism
- Contamination
- Pollution
- Space Allocation
- Water Development Problems
- Recreational, Aesthetic and Cultural Developments

LOOK AHEAD

Things to do in your classroom:

- Make conservation a part of all subject matter areas.
- Bring in community resource people to talk about conservation action.
- Use appropriate films to emphasize problems and solutions.
- Utilize appropriate class demonstrations and experiments.
- Keep weather records to emphasize environment.
- Have a conservation book shelf in your classroom or library.
- Utilize a bulletin board.

Make bird houses and feeders in shop classes.
Set up an aquarium and/or terrarium.
Germinate seeds, plant bulbs.
Encourage class conservation projects.

Things to do out of the classroom:

Visit local industries, a farm, greenhouse, dairy, produce market.

Locate and study throughout the year a pond, a stream, a forest, a meadow, the school grounds, an eroded hillside.

Visit a cave, abandoned strip mine, stone quarry, dry stream bed, road cut, to study rocks, soils, vegetation and erosion problems.

LOOK TOWARD

Values to be achieved:

Help young people to understand local, national and world resource-use problems.

Create an awareness and an understanding of the environment and its effect on everyday living.

Supply educational experiences which bridge the gap between the classroom and the natural environment.

Provide a better understanding of the interrelationships fundamental to living things.

Help to recognize natural resource problems and issues.

Develop a high sense of individual responsibility to analyze problems and corrective measure relative to physical and natural environment.

LOOK NOW

Where to go for help:

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120
Contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District at your County Commissioner's Office

Pennsylvania Department of Forests and Waters
South Office Building, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120
Contact your local District Forester

Pennsylvania Department of Health
Health and Welfare Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Topographic and Geologic Survey
Old Museum Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Pennsylvania Fish Commission
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120
Contact your local Fish Warden or Regional Office listed on the front inside cover of the Pennsylvania Angler

Pennsylvania Game Commission
South Office Building, Box 1567
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120
Contact your local Game Protector or your Field Division Office listed on the back cover of the Game News

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Box 911, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126

U. S. Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service, Box 985
Federal Square Station
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17108
Contact your local U. S. D. A. Soil Conservation Service Office

U. S. Forest Service
6816 Market Street, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania 19082

U. S. Department of Interior
National Park Service
Northeast Regional Office
143 South 3rd Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
204 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 17120

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Environmental education deals with both human and natural resources and their relationship to each other—in other words with the total environment.

Effective environmental education can take place both indoors and outdoors. In the classroom, the student discovers what is meant by "environment" and why it is important to man. Outdoors, the student comes into firsthand contact with what he has been learning indoors.

Both theory and experience point to the wisdom of making environmental education a basic part of the curriculum from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

In virtually all academic disciplines, opportunity exists to drive home the fact that man's life and the quality of his civilization depend on the rational use of the resources in his physical environment.